of the apprentices did not do as well as others.

Pretty soon the chaplain came in and I again explained who I was, what I was and what I represented, and I said, "I believe we sent you some books, 1,500 books; you have had 1,500 new books recently?" "Oh, no, not as many as that," he said. The trusty spoke up and said, "Just about 1,500." I said, "I was told we were sending that number." "But they did not come from you," said the chaplain. And remembering that I must go carefully, I said, "Why, I thought we sent you some." Then the trusty intervened again; bringing forward a book, he said, "Yes, those came from the American Library Association," opening it and showing our bookplate. The chaplain looked at it and said, "Well, I had never seen that bookplate; I thought all the time those books came from the Soldiers' Aid Society in New York." Then and there I made up my mind in Fort Leaven-worth these book plates were going on the outside as well as the inside of the book.

Then he voiced some of his apprehensions about our coming in there with our books and I was able to allay his fears and finally I said, "If we can send you from 500 to 1,000 books, new scientific books, books on the war, technical books, would you like them?" "You bet your boots," he said.

I am sure that anything sent there is going to be taken care of. They have got a long room with wooden stacks; they are going to have steel stacks; they have taken all the books they can from the Kansas Commission and have had them relettered and put back on the shelves. They have taken gift books which came through us and classified and arranged those; and let me say that my conclusion is we are going to have a permanent library there in the Y. M. C. A. building.

WAR DEPARTMENT INDEXES*

Some of the principal indexes connected with war work are the following: A card index of the men in the American Expeditionary Forces is built up from passenger lists prepared at the ports of embarkation, and signed by the company commanders. Before being typed they are carefully scrutinized by experienced women clerks and every possible error corrected. Every local address is verified against the Postal Guide, the Western Union list of telegraph offices, and if necessary against an atlas. For cases still in doubt two cards are typed and stamped "Data Uncertain." One of these goes to file at once, and the other is used as a basis for further investigation. The original enlistment paper is the best and principal source of verification, for here we have an official document signed by the soldier himself.

The errors which creep into the records are mainly due to poor handwriting, careless typing, and to misunderstanding and misspelling information given by word of mouth. Then there are those cases where the soldier for reasons best known to himself deliberately gives a false name or false emergency address.

The Chief of Staff has officially stated that more than 900,000 men are already in France, and that the million mark will soon be reached. We have a card for each man; and are now typing and filing upwards of 10,000 cards a day. The problems of a great file of names are very different from those of a library catalog. Our file already occupies 1,080 trays, the Smith family leading in occupancy of eight trays.

Another file is that of the enlistment papers. After about eighteen or twenty files of enlistment papers had grown up,

*Extracts from a letter from Lieut. Willis F. Sewall, of the Statistical Division, Adjutant General's office, to Miss Adelaide F. Evans, chairman Catalog Section, A. L. A.

they were turned into one alphabet, a process involving the handling of about two million papers. From the latest muster rolls envelopes or "jackets" are being typed for each man, to contain his enlistment papers, any personal papers, his service record when mustered out, etc.

In the bureau of war risk insurance applications and subsequent correspondence are filed numerically, with an alphabetical index. This will probably be the largest alphabetical index of names in the world, as the record will include all enlisted men, whether insured or not; giving the reasons for failure to take out insurance where men have not desired to avail themselves of it. The allotment sec-

tion of the bureau of war risk insurance is still another index.

A complete central occupational card index is being assembled, giving occupational qualifications of every registrant. These cards are arranged by symbolic numbers for occupations, with geographical extensions of numbering. Besides this occupational index of registrants, there is a card catalog of educational, occupational and military qualifications of every enlisted man.

Finally, as it takes money as well as some other things to win the war, there may be mentioned the file of income tax returns, arranged geographically and by size of income, the file comprising about thirteen million entries.

COST REDUCTION IN CATALOGING

By T. FRANKLIN CURRIER, *Assistant Librarian, Harvard College Library*

In the industrial world a lowering of the cost and a more finished product resulted from the transfer of the process of manufacture from the home and small shop to the factory. The centralization of cataloging by placing it in the hands of a large institution which has every facility for doing it well and economically has had a similar result in the library world. Further improvements and economies will undoubtedly result from further centralization and greater coördination of effort on the part of catalogers. It is to the catalog departments of our larger libraries that we look for the realization of such plans, but it is just these departments that are finding increasing costs and inelastic budgets most burdensome, and it is here, therefore, that the greatest demand exists for studying carefully the relation of quantity and quality of output to cost.

It is our duty as catalogers by mutual conference to pool experiences, marshal facts and figures, study the relation of our work to the problems of larger library ad-

ministration and thus reinforced to bring about an intelligent and sustained pressure for adequate support. At the same time we must promote and prepare for increased resources by learning how to utilize to the utmost those now at our command. We must study carefully the cost of production, take advantage of every method that leads to economy, prune away with ruthlessness each process the value of which we cannot prove. This, I take it is the aim of our conference to-day.

In response to your chairman's request I might enumerate the labor-saving devices I have found useful. A symposium of such papers would suggest to each one of us specific methods that we have not ourselves stumbled on, but I refrain, for the essential thing that we wish to teach to our staff is not so much individual specific methods as the habit of mind that will instinctively plan each piece of work in the best way and avoid inefficient procedure.

I should like then to consider the economies resulting from the application